

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

JUNE 2010

Taking a sabbatical: a time of rest and refreshment

The dictionary defines a sabbatical as 'a period of leave from work for research, study or travel' and I am very grateful to the Bishop of Kensington and to St. Mary's Wardens, Mark Nichols and Leo Fraser MacKenzie, for granting me a sabbatical this year, which marks the 10th year of my ordination and my sixth year as priest-in-charge of St. Mary's. The sabbatical is for three months and the Bishop suggested it should be a time of rest and refreshment and I have planned the three months with this in mind. I hope it will also be a time for reflection and re-connection.

I shall be away from 1 July to 30 September, beginning with a trip to Germany to learn more about Hildegard of Bingen, one of my spiritual heroines, who has been described as an 'ideal model of the liberated woman' and who 'was a Renaissance woman several centuries before the Renaissance'. She was a painter and poet, a musician and healer, theologian and prophet, mystic, an abbess, playwright and social critic. The visit will also, I hope, give me the opportunity to practice my very rusty German and in a sense re-connect me to the time I lived in Germany both as a child and as an adult.

From 27 July to 31 August I will be at St. Beuno's Ignatian Spirituality Centre near St. Asaph, north Wales, where I shall do the full Ignatian spiritual exercises, under the guidance of a spiritual director. The exercises involve engaging with the stories in the Gospels and most of the time will be spent in silence. I am told the area is good for walking and I hope to spend some time going for long walks to prepare for the third section of the sabbatical. This will be to walk, with Patrick, some of the pilgrimage route to Santiago in Spain, starting in Burgos and hopefully arriving two weeks later in Santiago. On a walking holiday in south west France a few years ago we walked on a very small section of one of the French routes and

passed a number of pilgrims going in the direction of Santiago, which whetted our appetites to walk a longer section of the route. In between these three undertakings we will be having a holiday in Italy to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary and I hope to spend some time in York after the birth of our second grandchild.

The sabbatical promises to be a wonderful time and I am very much looking forward to it. While I am away the day-to-day running of the church will be left in the very capable hands of Ruth, John and Dave, with the Wardens there in case of any emergencies. I plan to have no contact with St. Mary's while I am away and so will look forward all the more to returning rested and refreshed for the next stage of my ministry, as I become Vicar of St. Mary's in mid-October.

Ginny Thomas

St Mary The Boltons Summer Fair Saturday, 19 June 2010, 14.00-17.00

Please tell all your families, neighbours and friends about the Fair!

With the summer quickly approaching, there is much to look forward to at St Marys and one of the highlights of course is our annual Summer Fair. The organising committee of Katrina Quinton and Joanna Hackett would very much appreciate offers of help from 'old hands' as well as anyone new who would like to be involved in the Fair.

As always, areas where members of the church are needed include the staffing of stalls, the donation of goods (see below) and volunteers on the day for setting up and taking down. Like last year, the proceeds from the Fair will go to support our two main charities: the Earl's Court Community Project (our local charity) and the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza (our international charity). These charities remain

our focus for a further year as we have committed to supporting them for a three year term.

Are you able to donate any of the following:

- Bric-à-brac
- Second hand books
- Bottles for the tombola
- Raffle prizes
- Homemade cakes and jams
- Children's toys
- Silent Auction lots
- Volunteering on the day?

If you are able to help in any way with the Fair, Katrina and Joanna would be delighted to hear from you. More information will be put in next month's Clarion. Thank you.

Katrina Quinton: 07753 986 523

katrina.quinton@virgin.net

Joanna Hackett: 07720 850 482

joanna@awberymorris.com

Art Exhibition

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A
PREVIEW OF THE

ART EXHIBITION AT ST. MARY THE
BOLTONS, S.W.10

THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2010, 19.30 - 21.30

THE EXHIBITION WILL BE OPENED AT 19.30
BY ARTIST AND ILLUSTRATOR
RICHARD SMITH

Richard Smith's free-lance work developed from 1983, alongside employed positions, including Director of Mind at Tower Hamlets. Since 2001 he has worked entirely on a free-lance basis, occasionally as an illustrator of campaigning and educational material, and more often as a consultant. He has worked in conjunction with sculptor David Moore and has designed and often coloured some of his works. In his illustrations Richard frequently uses a cartoon structure to convey a sensitive and, at times, controversial image. Richard also works with voluntary organisations and others in the fields of health and social care, homelessness and housing, community development and, sometimes, religious organisations. On a voluntary basis, he is a long-standing member of

a NHS Research Ethics Committee and a board member of a specialist housing association.

The exhibition will also be open on: Friday 18th June 10.00 – 17.00, Saturday 19 June (the day of the Summer Fair), 14.00 – 17.00, Sunday 20 June, 14.00 – 17.00, and Monday 21 June, 10.00 – 13.00.

Ann Mulcare

Thursday Lunch

Our monthly lunch will be on Thursday 13 June at 12.30. Our speaker will be Alison Naftalin, a government lawyer, who was motivated to set up 'Lively Minds' after spending two months volunteering in Ghana in 2007.

Lively Minds is improving the quality of life for children and their families in rural Ghana and Uganda by developing low-cost educational programmes that are run by the communities themselves. The work enlivens minds and empowers communities to use their own skills and resources to change their lives for the better. This is real sustainability and is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

If you would like to attend, please put your name on the sign-up sheet at the back of the church.

Edward Reynolds and the General Thanksgiving

Continued from last month...

Throughout 1659 and 1660 his sermons to parliament and London notables had become increasingly pointed about the need for peace, unity, and moderation, codes for the restoration of the monarchy and accommodation with [episcopalians](#). This move was to pay off handsomely. When the monarchy was restored in 1660, Reynolds was made chaplain to [Charles II](#). In the same year he was elected warden of Merton College, and made bishop of Norwich, a post which he retained for the rest of his life. In his later years Reynolds was severely afflicted by [the stone](#).

and [strangury](#) (irritation of the bladder). He died on 28 July 1676 in his palace and was buried in the chapel he had newly built there.

The *Book of Common Prayer* was a product of the English Reformation after the break with Rome. It was first published in 1549, in the reign of King Edward VI, under the editorial hand of the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cramer. Two minor revisions quickly followed in 1552 and 1559, but after the convulsions of the English Civil war it was felt that a major revision was needed. One of the complaints of the Puritans was that there were not enough prayers of thanksgiving in the book. A new prayer of thanksgiving was commissioned and the chosen author, to no one's surprise, was Bishop Edward Reynolds. The prayer that he wrote, called the General Thanksgiving, first appeared in the 1662 revision of the Prayer Book. It is still in use today. (*Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*, 2000, p 109.)

It reads as follows:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we Thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men.

We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we beseech Thee, give us such due sense of all Thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may show forth Thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up our selves to Thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;

through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory world without end - Amen.

This prayer has been called 'the chiefest treasure in the Prayer Book'. When I was at school it was recited in Chapel on Saturday evenings and has been a favourite for the past 70 years.

In the opening words, 'Almighty God ...' we identify ourselves as unworthy and humble. This is a far cry from the histrionics of the *Litany* where we addresses ourselves no less than eight times as 'miserable sinners' or even the Communion Service in the same book, which causes us to 'bewail our manifold sins and wickedness ... most grievously committed ... provoking most justly [God's] wrath and indignation against us'. This sort of language sounds over the top to modern ears. Just calling ourselves 'unworthy' strikes exactly the right note, leading to hearty gratitude for God's goodness and loving kindness to us all. Purists may balk at the non-inclusive word 'men', but this is to overlook that in English (unlike German for example) the word 'man' has two meanings: 1) 'an adult human male', and 2) 'a human being of either sex; a person as in *God cares for all races and all men*.

The next section is a masterpiece. We thank God for our creation (who could refuse that if they enjoy life at all) and crucially for our preservation. 'New every morning is the love, our waking and uprising prove'. I have had close brushes with death on some eight occasions, almost always because of my own foolhardiness or lack of judgement, but what really brought the force of this clause home to me was something that happened to my eldest son. He was flying his light aircraft to Martha's Vineyard (USA) for a day's fishing when the engine blew up, covering most of the windscreen with oil. He put the plane down on the Long Island expressway among all the traffic, quite undamaged; pulled onto the grass verge and waited to be towed home. Since that day I have invested the word 'preservation' with special meaning. So we come to the heart of the Christian message: our Lord's 'redemption of the world', however we may understand that phrase; the 'means of grace', by which we can understand the Christian sacraments, not least the Eucharist; and the 'hope of glory' – be that personal survival in heaven (or in purgatory, more likely) or a more mysterious life 'hid in Christ with God'. Everything is said, in no more than 20 words, all but two of them monosyllables. It is an epitome of stylish writing.

The third section ingeniously turns the prayer of thanksgiving into a short homily on the good life. With our hearts full of gratitude at the sense of God's mercies we are to cash this not only by what we say (our praise) but in what we do. That is to live our lives in conscious service. We are to 'walk before' God, which is to remind us of his ever-watchful presence, always in 'holiness and righteousness', doing right both towards God and all mankind. Once again, in some 30 simple words, this prayer lays out the prospectus for 'all our days'. So easy do we find it to say these honeyed words, but how hard it is to 'live more nearly as we pray'.

Did Edward Reynolds succeed in this? It is easy to deride the twisting path he chose. Pepys never allowed the bishop of Norwich to forget his past and continued to refer to him as an 'old Presbyterian', which was fair enough. Most of us have got fed up with bishops at one time or another. To sit lightly to the office of bishop till it is your turn to become one, if not very edifying, is human enough. Presbyterians have a high view of the Christian calling. To remain loyal to the idea of monarchy, at the cost of one's job, while certainly not required of Christians, implies a certain loftiness of spirit. So we should cut Edward Reynolds some slack in this regard; and for the prayer he wrote, we can all remain 'unfeignedly thankful'.

Hugh Beach

Thursday Lunch, 13 May

The Thursday lunch meeting on 13 May was attended by 26 members of the congregation and three representatives of the Metro Bank. Paul Marriott-Clarke, Regional Director for retail business spoke about the Bank; trainee Jayne Mistry talked about her experience of working with community organisations in the Earls Court area, including especially St Mary's; and branch manager Laura Moyses was present in support.

Paul explained that when the Metro Bank opens for business this summer it will be the first new high street bank to be authorised for business in the UK for more than 150 years. He contrasted the few typically very large banks in the UK with the more than 2,000 banks in the USA, where banks are frequently opening and closing. He said that the current bad public

reputation of British banks encouraged the Metro Bank with its American origins, to try to bring a fresh approach to banking here. 'Fresh' actually means going back to earlier banking practice in the UK of 'community banking'. The local bank managers will seek strong relationships with customers and deal flexibly with many matters without reference to higher, distant, computer driven authority. They will encourage responsible lending, with the bank manager's personal judgement able – where appropriate – to override the computerised answers typically found in other banks. In support of the community focus they will seek to play their part in raising capability among people about money matters, including work with school children. They will support hardship situations by linking with local charities.

The Metro Bank opens on the corner of the Earls Court and Cromwell Roads in July, one of the first four stores they are opening in London. It will be open seven days a week, 361 days a year (not on Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter), and on weekdays open from 08.00 to 20.00. Personal contact with customers will be key. They will be able to carry out many functions on the spot, such as issuing debit cards and cheque books. Online banking will be available for those wishing that facility, and 'and there will be no stupid banking rules'. Banking will be free, the bank making its money through the difference between the rates payable for lending or borrowing money. 'Satisfaction will be guaranteed' by minimising mistakes and correcting them quickly when they occur, with a compensation payment to the customer. The Bank plans to open 40 stores in the London area by 2014, and many more later.

Jayne Mistry spoke about her work for St Mary's under Ruth Lampard's lead on the community audit and on energy conservation, and with the Earls Court Community Trust helping to identify issues in the area needing support. She said that she had found many people reflecting on the positive aspects of life in the area with its great social and ethnic diversity. She had also found widespread concerns that the area was becoming too 'gentrified' with inadequate affordable housing,

and with special difficulties for the elderly and for mental health needs.

Arthur Tait

They that go down to the sea in ships...

They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters,
These see the works of the Lord
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depth;
Their soul melteth away because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
and He bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.

This is an extract of psalm 107 whose title surprised me: 'The Lord's enduring love'. It seemed at first a little incongruent with the image that the words were painting. The Lord here is not exactly the archetypal image of the gentle, loving God, and I have to admit that a description of anyone that churns the waves at will seems rather more awe inspiring than tender. It is perhaps a less human image of God than we are used to: someone who may not fit entirely comfortably under the eaves of a cosy church.

Instead of finding this worrying, however, the author has filled his work with a sense of wonder that simply leaps off the page. There is recognition of God's untamed side, but also a new understanding, like a flash of insight that this indefinable God is also inexplicably concerned for our wellbeing. This is indeed a most miraculous state of affairs and the verses here resonate with the joy and wonder of it.

The psalm then is a celebration of God and the love that He has for His people. We should thank God, the author says with 'shouts of joy'. Similar to Ginny's requests for more enthusiastic alleluias, it is a plea for us to marvel at God and at His incredible generosity, for our

God has 'wonders in the deep' and it can be good to remember it.

Camila Ruz

Franciscan Tertiaries at St Mary's

There are four Franciscan Tertiaries who are parishioners of St Mary's, and following the request of a parishioner, they take it in turn (one per month) to write about their experience of this commitment. Dorothy Patrick opens the series:

My first contact with the Franciscan Brothers was in 1943 when I moved to Cambridge and spent two years there. The Brothers looked after St Bene't's Church, which I attended. I was very struck by their dedication, peacefulness and joyfulness.

In about 1990 I met a Franciscan Sister who was a great help to me. She eventually told me about the Third Order of St Francis, which consists of lay men and women in many countries of the world who want to follow the way of St Francis as closely as is practical. I discovered at this time that my younger daughter was already very involved in the Third Order of the Society of St Francis (TSSF). When the TO was started in the 1920s and for many decades afterwards, it was almost like a secret society, hence the reason why I had not heard about it from my daughter.

In 1991 I started my preparation for full membership. I was assigned a one-to-one instructor who became a very good friend and we still have lunch together two or three times a year. I learned about the teachings of St Francis and also about making a rule of life. The latter is tremendously helpful as it helps one to be regular in prayer times, Bible reading, etc. Eventually the great day came and I was professed (became a full member of the Third Order).

Besides the spiritual help, being a member has meant that I am in a small group (about eight of us) who meet together monthly to discuss topics of subjects of interest to us all. These meetings are enjoyable, educative and wonderfully friendly. I am so grateful for all that my membership of TSSF has and continues to give me.

Dorothy Patrick

Open Farm Sunday

Unfortunately we have cancelled the visit to the farm on Sunday 13 June as not enough people signed up to make it viable.

Parish Outing to Salisbury on Saturday 17 July

This year our parish day out will be to the beautiful city of Salisbury. Salisbury Cathedral has been a place of pilgrimage for over 750 years, has Britain's tallest spire, Europe's oldest working clock and the world's best preserved copy of the Magna Carta.

On our arrival at Salisbury we will have a guided tour of the Cathedral, followed by a Eucharist in the Lady Chapel. After that everyone is free to roam for the rest of the day. Some may want to bring a picnic, others may want to lunch in local eateries; the Cathedral refectory has light lunches and snacks, and there are lots of places to eat nearby.

The afternoon gives plenty of time either to go back into the Cathedral and explore it more deeply or else to delve into the town. Salisbury calls itself 'The city in the countryside': it is a magnificent medieval city with historic streets and alleyways and charming half-timbered buildings. Mompesson House in the Cathedral Close is a National Trust property and the Queen Anne House is well worth a visit, and featured in *Sense and Sensibility*. The countryside is close by, giving those fleet of foot a chance to explore footpaths or walk by the river.

Whether visiting Salisbury for the first time or revisiting, there is lots to see and do.

We will meet outside Church at 08.15 for a prompt departure, and will depart from Salisbury at 16.30, returning to Church by 19.00.

The price of the tour will depend to some extent on how full the coach is: if we have 26 people the cost will be approx £24 for the coach and £6 for the tour. We hope to keep the costs to £30 or less. If we fill a 34-seater

coach the cost of travel will be £17.50, bringing the total cost down to £23.50.

We do not want money to be an obstacle for anyone who would like to come; if help is needed towards the cost of the trip, please see Ginny or Ruth. Helen Trafford is organising the trip and is happy to answer any questions.

Please sign up on the sheet at the back of Church.

St Martin-in-the-Fields WC2N 4JJ

Friday 25 June, 19.30

RACHMANINOV

Vespers

(All-night Vigil)
by candlelight

Nonsuch Singers

Stephanie Allman *alto*

Oliver Johnston *tenor*

Graham Caldbeck *conductor*

Box Office 020 7766 1100

Online www.smitf.org

The performance will have no interval and should finish about 20.45

Report to the Congregation following the PCC meeting on 20 May 2010

As most of you know, the PCC consists of about a dozen members of the congregation who act as trustees of the church's assets and help Ginny and Ruth to oversee its work.

We met on Thursday for one of our regular quarterly meetings and here is a brief summary of three of the things we discussed:

1. First, and perhaps of greatest interest, is a proposal to install a Craigie Aitcheson window in the church. Craigie Aitcheson was an artist who died at the end of last year. He was renowned for his simple, modern style, his use of strong, bright colours and his depictions of the crucifixion. A parishioner with considerable experience of arts funding, Edwina Sassoon, came to brief us about her vision for an etched Craigie Aitcheson work to replace the plain glass in these two windows here. *[The double window nearest the lectern on the south side of the church]* The family has agreed to give his work for free but there would be fairly significant costs of having the work etched onto glass and installed. Edwina is confident that much of this can be raised from supporters of the arts rather than from the congregation or from church funds. It is an exciting proposal and the PCC fully supported it as a concept but there are plenty of hurdles still to get over and permissions to obtain, and it will take a number of years to come to fruition.

2. Secondly, the PCC formally resolved to appoint Ginny as our vicar, instead of our 'priest in charge'. In practical terms, this is just a technical change but it is a mark of the respect that the Bishop has for Ginny that it has been proposed: Ginny is what is termed a 'non-stipendiary', which means that she does not draw a salary from the church but gives her time for free, and it is rare for a non-stipendiary to be appointed a vicar. Our church does in fact still pay to the Diocese the salary that Ginny would draw, and it is used to help less wealthy parishes.

3. Thirdly, we discussed our financial situation. Unfortunately, like the government, we are, for a number of reasons, currently running a structural deficit which is expected to be about £20,000 this year. We are fortunate in having some reserves that we can call upon in the short term but, like the government, we need to take action to balance our books and we will be looking at the best way of doing this over the coming months.

Do please speak to me, Ginny or any of the other PCC members if you have any questions on any of these issues.

Treasures Lambeth Palace Library

Lambeth Palace Library is one of the earliest public libraries in England, founded in 1610 under the will of Archbishop Richard Bancroft. In celebration of its 400th anniversary in 2010 the library is opening a fascinating exhibition to the public in the Great Hall of Lambeth Palace. Some of the highlights include The MacDuran Gospels, written and illuminated in Ireland in the 9th Century, The Lambeth Bible, a masterpiece of Romanesque art, an exceptionally rare edition of the Babylonian Talmud which survived a 1553 Papal Bull ordering all copies to be burnt to name but a few. Admission is £8 for adults, £7 concessions

Years Mind

Joan Palin
Pamela Shaw
Gary Davies
Britta Osdahr
Leslie Stone
Leonard Berry
David Dixon
Evelyn Davson
Madge Terry
Hugo Phil
Marjorie Cooling
Kenrick Prescott
Gisela Osbahr
Doreen Allen

**Contributions for the July/August Clarion
should be sent in to the church office by
18 July**